

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

21 APR 1976

Mr. James M. Frey
Assistant Director for Legislative Reference
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Mr. Frey:

This is in response to your request for our views on S. 2132, a bill "To require that Government forms be discontinued or revised every five years and that new or revised forms shall be used only when necessary." Section 2(c) of the bill provides that all new or revised forms be used only after approval by the Comptroller General.


S. 2132 applies, on its face, to "all forms in use by executive agencies." It would require that forms so used be "short, simple, and understandable." These latter criteria suggest an intent to limit the procedures in S. 2132 only to forms which are promulgated by agencies for use by the general public. This limitation would, if intended, be desirable. The Central Intelligence Agency strongly recommends that the proposed legislation be clarified so that it explicitly pertains only to forms designed for public use.

Many of the Agency's internal forms are classified and relate to intelligence methods and Agency internal organization and security-related procedures. In this connection, the National Security Act of 1947 imposes on the Director of Central Intelligence the statutory responsibility to protect intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure. In addition the CIA Act of 1949 exempts the Agency from the provisions of any law which require the publication or disclosure of the Agency's organization. GAO review of such sensitive forms would be inconsistent with these statutory authorities.

Finally, this Agency already maintains its own forms review program. This program is designed to challenge each new and revised form as to whether the information is needed, whether the information is available from other sources, and whether the cost of gathering and processing the information is excessive. Our records officers and forms analysts also try to consolidate like forms wherever possible, and eliminate unnecessary items so as to produce forms that are simple to complete and easy to understand. Therefore, at least with respect to this Agency, the procedures outlined in S. 2132 are largely duplicative and unnecessary.

For the foregoing reasons, the Central Intelligence Agency opposes S. 2132 in its present form.

Sincerely,


Legislative Counsel



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